

Masthead Logo

The Iowa Review

Volume 30

Issue 3 *Winter 2000-2001*

Article 6

2000

The Astronomer

Julianne Buchsbaum

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Buchsbaum, Julianne. "The Astronomer." *The Iowa Review* 30.3 (2000): 46-46. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.5318>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Julianne Buchsbaum

THE ASTRONOMER

I eat stars, breathe stars, bathe in stars.
I dream incoherent dreams of comets,
asteroids, and lunar Alps. Becoming
myself a satellite, I orbit the shrine

of a holy sun, tracing for all time an egg-
shaped pilgrimage through gelid space.
I see the city as through a telescope:
streetlamps glow, contracted white dwarfs,

traffic lights are red giants burning up
their final rounds of hydrogen.
Sidewalks sway beneath my density
as cabs career elliptically through streets.

The hemisphere unveils for me its sheer
and empty skull of glass as leaves crinkle
in the cold dark outside the planetarium.
At times, Polaris seems to leak skim milk,

the Pleiades are plotting their escape,
and Betelgeuse burns Orion's shoulder.
Priest of distances, I've mastered the art
of leaving hope and human shores behind.

Or has it mastered me? Even the moon
wears her evanescence on her sleeve.
What is it in me always trying to flee
across spaces coldblooded, godless?

It is a mood of blue magnified by solitude.
A solitude magnified by the sight of stars.
The sight of stars through the telescope lens,
the stars, nomadic planets, and the moon.